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NEW YORK (UPI) -- PROMISING THEIR IDENTITY WILL NOT BE REVEALED, CIA DIRECTOR GEORGE BUSH SAYS THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY WELCOMES AMERICAN JOURNALISTS WORKING ABROAD TO COOPERATE "ON A VOLUNTARY BASIS" AS UNPAID INFORMERS.

"WE WANT YOUR COOPERATION ON A VOLUNTARY BASIS," BUSH SAID THURSDAY NIGHT IN A POLICY SPEECH TO THE OVERSEAS PRESS CLUB.

"WE WILL CONTINUE WITHIN CERTAIN LIMITATIONS TO GIVE BRIEFINGS TO ENCOURAGE YOUR CONTACTS WITH OUR PEOPLE AND IF YOU DO HELP OR IF A BUSINESSMAN HELPS US -- AND I SAY HELPS OUR COUNTRY -- OR A PROFESSOR WANTS TO HELP HIS COUNTRY BY COOPERATING WITH THE CIA; OR A TOURIST, OR A HAIRDRESSER OR WHOEVER IT IS, AND IF THEY WANT THEIR NAME KEPT SECRET, IT'S GOING TO BE KEPT SECRET," THE DIRECTOR SAID.

BUSH SAID ALTHOUGH THE CIA EMPLOYED JOURNALISTS ON ITS PAYROLL IN THE PAST THAT PRACTICE NOW HAS BEEN ABANDONED. HE SAID THOSE WHO HAVE HELPED HIS AGENCY WOULD NOT BE IDENTIFIED.

"HAVING CHANGED OUR OVERALL POLICY TO ELIMINATE THE PAID USE OF JOURNALISTS, I WILL NOT REVEAL THE NAMES OF PEOPLE WHO HAVE HELPED THIS AGENCY IN THE PAST OR ARE WILLING TO HELP THIS AGENCY IN THE FUTURE," BUSH SAID.

THERE HAS BEEN PRESSURE ON THE CIA TO DISCLOSE THE IDENTITY OF JOURNALISTS WHO HAD WORKED FOR THE AGENCY. THE NEWS MEDIA CONTENDS THE CIA, BY NOT REVEALING THE IDENTITY OF JOURNALISTS WHO HAVE HELPED THE AGENCY, COULD CAST SUSPICION ON OTHER JOURNALISTS WHO HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THE CIA.

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